

Breaking Barriers Video Transcript

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Danielle Luer: We've discovered that language is a real barrier for parent engagement. So, one of the things that we have implemented this year in our school district is an application platform that allows us to text parents and for parents to text back to the educators in the language of their choice. And because teachers are allowed to text in their preferred language and parents receive it in their preferred language, the communication has been flowing much more freely, which is a really wonderful way to break down that language barrier. We have discovered that just the opportunity for parents and teachers to speak to each other or the intention of communication has really opened some doors and allowed parents to feel at least that they have a means for communication, and that's been very, very wonderful.

Parent 1: Ay, pues, mire, pues las personas que, que nos entendemos, pues, y, uno quisiera aprender. Yo quisiera, este, aprender el inglés. Que si a mí me dicen, "Vente, aquí te vamos a dar la clase," con gusto. Yo me vendría.

Nay: They have us into two groups at school. They have the DLI grade, which is Spanish and English. **Interviewer:** Mm-hmm. **Nay:** Which is what I'm in, and then the ELI grade, which is just English[inaudible]. **Interviewer:** Mm-hmm. **Nay:** And there have been times where they, like, just totally, like, overlook DLI. It's like they don't actually They don't see, or like . . . ¿Cómo se dice reconocer? **Interviewer:** Recognize? **Nay:** Recognize. [Inaudible] They don't recognize, like, if we're doing good and stuff, like only the teachers in that grade. DLI did an insane amount of lessons. **Interviewer:** Uh-huh. **Nay:** We've done, I want to say, we broke the record of any grade who's done the most in one whole year in the first quarter, for example. **Interviewer:** Oh, wow. **Nay:** Like ever. Which is pretty awesome. But, like, in our last assembly, they were like, "Sixth grade, your i-Ready progress has been great." They didn't even think about saying, "Hey, DLI, good job." **Interviewer:** Mm. **Nay:** Or when there was a book bowl, which is actually really fun, and I was so excited to participate in it, and they didn't give DLI, when they could've. **Interviewer:** Mm-hmm. **Nay:** Because they forgot about us, the chance to participate. **Interviewer:** Mm. **Nay:** And it's kind of just always overlooking DLI specifically, which is the one that has two languages.

Danielle Luer: Also, we've discovered that getting people face-to-face is difficult often because of transportation needs, and the transportation needs of our immigrant families and our multilingual families uh, seem to be growing. And because our community doesn't have a plethora of, of public transportation opportunities, what we do have is, uh, an immigrant grant that we were able to win this year that has given us the opportunity to buy gas cards, bus passes, um, taxi vouchers, and really kind of provide opportunities for those after-school extracurricular activities for both our students and for our parents to engage in parent-teacher conferences, um, come to sports games, IEP meetings.

Natalie Lau-Chien: Some barriers that multilingual learner families might face in attending school events might include lack of communication in their home language, lack of childcare for younger siblings, or maybe just a simple unfamiliarity with the type of school event being held. One way that I decided to get creative and try to solve this barrier is by changing the name from calling it to an open house to calling it a back-to-school party. And I would have my students make cute invitations in their home language that they could give their parents, inviting them to come to our back-to-school party, and they were also welcome to bring younger siblings, and they could bring a home dish from their culture if they so chose. And after this, I noticed that there was an increase in turnout. Families came out and were able to connect with the school and with each other, and it was just a huge success.

Parent 2: Sí, me he sentido diferente, este, como decía, con una comunidad, como más, como en casa. Más que nada porque, pues como, la verdad yo no hablo inglés, ¿verdad? Entonces sí es como una barrera el poder comunicarme con los maestros, con, pues, con los padres de familia, tal vez. **Interviewer:** Mm-hmm. **Parent 2:** Y ahora que estamos en el grupo, pues, me siento un poco más en confianza porque hablan mi mismo idioma, venimos casi de las, no las mismas culturas, pero, como que estamos haciendo esa unión. Mm-hmm. Me siento más tranquila.

Parent 1: Si queremos tener una comunidad, es de empezar a hablar, decir, "Sabes qué, yo tengo este proyecto, ¿cómo ves? Ah, vamos a comentarle a Fulanita". Y Fulanita, sí, es algo que se va, es una cadenita, que nos va agarrando a cada uno y se va enganchando poco a poco. Y yo siento que así podemos hacer una comunidad.

Voiceover: We would like to thank Danielle, Jimena, Claudia, Nay, Natalie, Nayeli, and Luis for their time and for sharing their experiences with us. Although not all who collaborated with us around breaking barriers are featured in this brief video, their voices are represented in our resources. We appreciate all of you.